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MARKING THE SPOTS

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ADDRESSES

DELIVERED IN COMMEMORATION OF MARKING
THE SPOTS

Connected with the Early Religious
Life of Lebanon



May 20, 1908

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Free Press Office, Lebanon, N. H.

J. W. Ashley

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Introduction

DURING the spring of 1907 it was my privilege to spend several afternoons in the delightful company of Mr. Solon A. Peck, one of Lebanon's most honored citizens, in search of historical data. Among the many places visited are two spots of unusual significance, one is on the highway adjoining the N. S. Johnson place on South Main Street, West Lebanon. As far as historical knowledge and tradition can aid us it was on this spot, on the east bank of the Connecticut river, where the first congregations in Lebanon assembled for Christian worship and religious ceremonies. What Plymouth Rock signifies to all New England, in a restricted and yet as real and important a sense, that spot of earth should be a shrine for all inhabitants of the town of Lebanon. The grantees of the charter, the original proprietors and the early pioneers from 1761 to 1772, when want and poverty stared them in the face, in the midst of constant peril and dangers of the Indians, and the beasts of the forests, those first settlers assembled on that spot to acknowledge and worship God before permanent homes were built or the school and church appeared. That is a memory to be made sacred and worthy of perpetuity.

Another spot of unusual interest is a portion of the field, west of the Alden place, on land formerly owned by Elijah Kimball. Here the first meeting house was erected in 1772 and stood for twenty years. The history of those twenty years is full of interest and instruction.

Because of the historic associations and blessed memories that naturally cluster around these two spots, several of the families born and bred in Lebanon thought it

fitting and right that in some way these spots should be marked. Mr. Peck was deeply concerned about this and was ready to do his part of the work. But his health had been gradually failing and before the end of the year 1907 he passed away. His upright character and his memory became a source of inspiration to me. In the spring of 1908, article sixteen was prepared for the warrant of the town meeting: "To see if the town will appropriate the sum of fifty dollars for the erection of two substantial markers, one on the spot where the first religious meetings were held in town, and the other on the spot where the first meeting house stood, or act thereon." The citizens voted the above sum to be raised for that purpose. Previous to this, several private subscriptions were received and the families solicited generously responded. Thanks are due these persons and others who have made the appearance of this volume possible. Necessary expenses have been willingly met.

During the sessions of the General Association of Congregational churches of New Hampshire, which was to meet in Lebanon, May 19-21, the committee on arrangements planned commemorative services of local interest. The markers with proper inscriptions were set in place during the first week of May. A special train well filled with passengers, run from Lebanon to West Lebanon on the afternoon of Wednesday, May 20. Special services were held on the two historic spots. Automobiles and carriages were used for transportation. Rev. Edward L. Gulick presided at each service.

The order of exercises was as follows: Outdoor service at the place where the first religious gatherings were held in town from 1761 to 1772. Address of welcome, Mr. Charles S. Ford, chairman of Board of Selectmen; Address, Religious Conditions in New Hampshire during

the period 1750 to 1800, Rev. Lucius H. Thayer, Portsmouth; Address, Historic Sketch of Early Life of Lebanon, its first church and pastor, 1761 to 1817, Rev. John E. Whitley, Lebanon. An outdoor service at the place where the first meeting house stood from 1772 to 1792: Address, The New England Church on the Hill, Rev. Roy B. Guild, Boston, Mass.; Address, Historic Spots as Reminders, Rev. Cyrus Richardson, D. D., Nashua; Address, The Layman's Part in Church Building, Mr. William S. Carter, Lebanon.

Each address was carefully prepared and now appears in printed form to become a ready reference, to perpetuate the sterling qualities of the first settlers of this region, and to be a source of inspiration to the present generation of young people, so that by reading carefully these pages, the youth may catch the spirit of religious fervor, which animated the forefathers and thus be fully equipped to transmit by spiritual succession the abiding realities of the religious life, faith and stewardship and sacrifice, even amid the changing conditions of the twentieth century.

"God of our fathers, be with us yet
Lest we forget, lest we forget."

JOHN E. WHITLEY,

Chairman of Committee.

Lebanon, N. H., July, 1908.



THIS MARKS THE SPOT
WHERE THE FIRST
RELIGIOUS GATHERINGS
WERE HELD IN THIS
TOWN
1768-1772
ERECTED 1908

Address of Welcome

BY CHARLES S. FORD, CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF SELECTMEN,
DELIVERED MAY 20, 1908, AT THE SPOT WHERE
THE FIRST RELIGIOUS GATHERINGS
WERE HELD IN TOWN.

MR. PRESIDENT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:—

One hundred and fifty years ago, these hills and valleys overlooking and bordering the Mascoma and Connecticut rivers, and which so many of us assembled here today, call home, was a pathless wilderness inhabited only by wild beasts and savage men: for to the north in Canada were the French; to the eastward were the small settlements at Dover and Portsmouth; to the west, beyond the Green Mountains, were the colonists of New York, and to the South at the mouth of the "Great River," were the people of Connecticut. About this time the stirring and enterprising people of Connecticut, hearing of the great advantages of the country through the accounts of explorers, began to push up the river, and here and there establish settlements in the fertile valley to the north, and finally a few men with their families reached this place and decided to make it their future home. I am sure that none of us realize the courage and firmness that were displayed by the men and women who settled here in the dense woods in those early times. They were compelled to rely wholly upon themselves for everything. They had to clear the land of heavy timber before they could raise a crop. They were obliged to brave the rigor of the terrible northern winter in log cabins with few of the comforts of civilized life, even of that period, and they had to fight wild beasts and the intangible, but no less real enemies of

loneliness and despair. No wonder that in those first years, they many times thought of their old homes down the river, and their friends and relatives there. And so they named the place Lebanon, from their old home in Lebanon, Connecticut.

I have said that they had to rely upon themselves. In these times, if men make new homes anywhere, they do it with the consciousness that if the crops fail, if misfortune of any kind overtakes them, there are large and wealthy communities within reasonable distances, who will compassionate their miseries and relieve their distress. But to whom could our forefathers who settled here and laid the foundations, look for comfort, aid and support? Not to the people of Canada, they were their bitter enemies, for France and England were at war. Not to the Indians, for they were the allies of the French and far more to be dreaded than they, for they were merciless, and to fall into their hands meant captivity, and death with cruel torture. Not to the Dutch of New York, for they were of an alien race and far away. Not to their friends in Connecticut, for at that time they were few in numbers and poor in this world's goods. But those men were of the Puritan stock, and when they settled in this wilderness and realized their weakness and need of help, they looked to the Eternal God.

And so my friends we have assembled here today to commemorate the one hundred and fortieth anniversary of the Lebanon church at the places where the first religious meetings were held, and where the first meeting house stood. What a great change has taken place since our great grandfathers met to worship here. The same sun shines upon us that shone upon them; the hills and the valleys are still here, our beautiful Connecticut with

her tributary, the Mascoma, sparkle and ripple as they sweep onward to the sea. But all else has changed, the great forests are gone, the wild beasts and the Red Men have disappeared, and the air that then only echoed to the sounds of nature, hums with the manifold vibrations of our modern civilization. Those men and women acted well their part in their day and generation. They were not perfect, they had the faults of their time. We know that they were intolerant and would not concede that others might be right that differed with them. But we are so ourselves, sometimes, and when those that come after us read of our doings in the records of the town, perhaps our disputes and disagreements may seem as trivial and foolish to them, as those of our ancestors do to us.

Isaiah Potter, the faithful pastor, with all the members of his congregation, are sleeping the last sleep, and it behooves us to uphold the cause of religion and righteousness in our day, as zealously as they did in theirs.

My friends, I shall not weary you with extended remarks. There are eloquent speakers who will follow me, and who will entertain and instruct you, something which I cannot hope to do. As most of you know, the preachers of the olden times were in the habit of preaching very long sermons, and Priest Potter, as he was formerly called, had this failing, his sermons would extend to fifteenthly and sixteenthly many times. And tradition says that he was not popular with all of the younger members of his flock on this account. And when the news spread over the town that the good man was dead, a little girl who had been compelled to sit through the delivery of some of those sermons, spoke up and said, "Good! We shan't have to go to meeting any more."

And so I will close by extending to you all hearty

welcome to Lebanon. May your visit be pleasant and linger long in your memories. And I assure you that we shall feel, long after you have departed to your homes, inspiration and encouragement for the work of the future, by meeting with you and commemorating the events of the past.

The Religious Conditions of New Hampshire During the Period 1750 to 1800

BY LUCIUS HARRISON THAYER, MINISTER OF THE NORTH
CHURCH, PORTSMOUTH, DELIVERED MAY 20, 1908,
AT THE SPOT WHERE THE FIRST RE-
LIGIOUS GATHERINGS WERE
HELD IN TOWN.

The last half of the eighteenth century was a period of greater change and wider significance than any other in the history of New Hampshire. It was a period of expansion and growth; of tumult and confusion; of contention of forces within and forces without. It was the age of storm and stress, in which the community was passing from the restraint and tutelage of its colonial childhood, and through all the growing pains and searching temptations of youth was developing into a well-ordered and responsible body politic. It was a time of assurance and self-assertion; of questioning and doubt; of arrogance and presumption; a time when new powers and capacities were disclosing themselves, a time of wild adventure and reckless daring; but withal a time of true self-discovery and of loyal obedience to a heavenly vision. There were elements of this experience of which we cannot be proud, but these were natural if not inevitable. On the whole the period was notable for its self-restraint, splendid in its heroism, and glorious in its consecration. For the achievement of that half century we should be profoundly thankful.

STIRRING POLITICAL EVENTS AND THEIR INFLUENCE.

The French and Indian war, which vexed the borders of New Hampshire from 1754 to 1763, and to which she sent 3,100 men; the Revolutionary struggle which called 12,000 of her sons into the field; the maintenance of a provisional government in state and nation; the preservation of her territory in the struggle with Vermont; the strife incident upon becoming an integral part of the new nation; these formed a series of events of absorbing interest and unparalleled importance. Industrial development was retarded during much of the half-century; and, since during the periods of peace crowding settlers were clearing fields and building houses, it was natural that the interests of religion and education should not flourish.

The temper of the times, which was one of controversy and contention, was sure to be in evidence in the religious activities. The practical extension of the principle of liberty in the political order was attended with freedom of inquiry, with revolt against constituted authority, with the breaking down of long-established customs, and with a new sense of personal importance on the part of the ordinary citizen. It was inevitable that some men should challenge the rights of the standing order in religion, and claim freedom to be guided in their spiritual interests by their own inclinations and prejudices.

THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT.

In 1750, New Hampshire was a royal province, under Gov. Benning Wentworth, who was in many ways an excellent chief magistrate. He was closely attached to the interests of the Church of England. In every township granted, he reserved a share for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, as well as a share for himself. He refused to grant the petition of the Piscataqua minis-

ters for a charter for a university, unless it were to be controlled by the Bishop of London. John Wentworth, who followed his uncle from 1768 until the outbreak of the Revolution, was a sincere Christian gentleman of distinction and charm. He won all classes to himself. He divided the province into five counties named after English friends. He built a great estate at Wolfeboro. He gave the land on which Dartmouth College is built, and more than any other man secured its future, by great grants of land. But a new day was at hand, a day which even the popularity of John Wentworth could not prevent. The oligarchy of Portsmouth was to be superseded. A new leadership was to appear. The plain people were to wage a war. Though many other New Hampshire men of education would be neutral, or on the Tory side, the ministers would not fail their people.

POPULATION AND ITS DISTRIBUTION.

At the middle of the eighteenth century, there were 30,000 people in New Hampshire, living in thirty-four incorporated towns, and a few scattered settlements. In 1775, the inhabitants had increased to 90,000, one-half of whom lived in Rockingham County, then extending beyond Concord. In 1790, the state had a population of 141,885 and one hundred seventy-two incorporated townships. At the end of the century, the population was 183,858, having doubled in twenty-five years. Portsmouth increased from 4,590 in 1775 to 5,339 in 1800. Londonderry, for a long period the second town in size, maintained itself at about 2,600. Exeter and Epping remained stationary with about 1,700 inhabitants. Chester grew from 1,599 to 1,902. In 1800, Concord was a pleasant village of 2,052, having grown from 350 in fifty years. Between 1775 and 1800, Dover had increased in popula-

tion from 1,666 to 2,062; Rochester from 1,518 to 2,018; Barrington from 1,655 to 2,470; while Sanbornton, settled as late as 1,770, had become a good town of 2,695; and Gilmanton, settled in 1763, had become the second largest town in the state, with 3,752 people dwelling in a highly developed community with the finest religious traditions.

Amherst, settled in 1741, was the leading town in Hillsboro County, having 2,369 inhabitants in 1800, while Hopkinton, Hollis and New Ipswich were good towns, having grown rapidly in the early period. In Cheshire County, Westmoreland and Chesterfield were the large towns, with over 2,000 people in each. Claremont in the last quarter century grew from 523 to 1,435; and Keene from 756 to 1,645. In Grafton County in the same period, Hanover increased from 434 to 1,902, and Lebanon from 347 to 2,000. These figures in themselves are not interesting, but they bring before us as nothing else can the relative size and the comparative growth of New Hampshire communities during the period under consideration.

THE COLONIAL CAPITAL.

In 1750, the settlements near the coast, with their long-established churches and other evidences of a settled community life, were well started on their second century. Portsmouth, during all the half-century, was characterized by a more elegant social life than any town in New England. The private chariots, liveried footmen, elegant amusements and handsome entertainments were particularly associated with a group of gentry who were attached to the provincial oligarchy. They patronized the Church of England, and in their habits of leisure, in their apparel and manners, they were reminiscent of the English Court. But the vigorous leadership which displaced this old-

fashioned splendor and which worshipped largely in Puritan churches, maintained and developed the traditions of a refined social life. At the end of the century, there were in Portsmouth many families of cultivation and many fine houses richly furnished, which were the centers of a generous hospitality. The evils which were attendant upon a gay life were existent. Gaming was more common and respectable than now, and gentlemen's private clubs of a convivial nature existed. Yet the Portsmouth men of political and social leadership and those prominent in the professions and in business were largely associated with the churches. Of more than one it is written: "He was a professor of religion and zealously attached to the church of which he was a member." And of John Langdon, a great servant of the church and state, it is added: "He cultivated an acquaintance with good and pious men of all denominations." With such leading citizens the ministers of the town associated as equals, standing shoulder to shoulder in the service of the community, and often sitting side by side at the festal board. These clergymen were the peers of their lay friends. Dr. Haven was for fifty-two years the erudite and liberal pastor of the South Parish. The ministers in the North Parish were Samuel Langdon, called to the presidency of Harvard College in 1774; Ezra Stiles, the scholar of the period, who followed Langdon and was called to the presidency of Yale in 1778; and Joseph Buckminster, whose pastorate of thirty-three years had a distinction and a beauty rarely surpassed. These were men of native simplicity, spiritual passion and great devotion, as well as men of power, and they addressed large congregations with authority.

OTHER PARTS OF OLD ROCKINGHAM.

Many of the ministers of this older reign were "men

of prominence in pulpit, in council, and in the various walks of private duty." "Sufficient each of himself to give a name and character to the town which enjoyed his services." Dr. Belknap, the historian, was at Dover. The opulent James Pike, of evangelistic temper, moulded Somersworth for sixty years. Amos Main and Joseph Haven were helping to build the frontier town of Rochester. Ebenezer Thayer was at Hampton, and Elihu Thayer, of missionary zeal, was at Kingston. Yet under the leadership of such men the membership of the churches was small, and religion apparently less vital than in some later decades.

The settlement of the younger Odlin at Exeter, in 1743, resulted in the formation of a second church, by the friends of the great revival, who felt that the majority of the old church by its action gave evidence of fixed opposition to the work of God. Exeter became the capital of the state in 1775, and so remained for fifteen years. This gave the town an unusual number of prominent residents. Of these it is recorded that "they were not generally church members, and some were a little loose in their lives, as well as skeptical in their theories. Some of the most interesting people intellectually, apparently were patriotic, high-bred, sometimes a little convivial, but spiritually nonentities."

Among the prominent politicians was Judge Paine Wingate, for eight years minister at Hampton Falls, whose rigid orthodoxy, rumor says, relaxed materially; and Gov. William Plummer, of Epping, who began life as a Baptist evangelist, but who during his distinguished career became a radical in religion and a warm champion of a constitution that guaranteed religious equality.

THE OLD FRONTIER AND THE INDIAN WAR.

In 1726, a brave and godly people, sifted from the

best stock of Essex County, began a settlement far up the Merrimac in the Indian region of Penacook. In 1730, they settled Timothy Walker, who remained their pastor for fifty-two years. He was a moderate Calvinist. He helped keep the Indians out of the settlement, and unaided, kept the "New Lights" out of his pulpit. The Massachusetts sponsors christened the town Rumford, but when Mr. Walker's three trips to England had saved the homes of his people from the Bow Proprietors, New Hampshire, at the end of all the conflicts, gave the town the new name of Concord. There, in the midst of a united people, religion flourished, and the church grew strong in such ways as a halfway covenant church might.

While the people of Concord succeeded in establishing themselves on the frontier, other intrepid and pious people, who began settlements about the same time, had their homes destroyed, and their meeting houses burned. Keene, Swanzey, Winchester, Peterboro, Hillsboro and Hopkinton were abandoned after substantial beginnings had been made, and other towns, as Walpole and Charlestown, were sorely vexed by savages. From Crown Point Indian marauders were dispatched by the French to ravage the border. It is said that Jesuit priests were not averse to the capture of Puritan offspring, who might be converted to the old religion. These experiences culminated in the French and Indian war. This was the time of romance and tragedy in the frontier towns. It was the time of John Stark and of Roger's Rangers.

THE GREAT MIGRATION.

After the fall of Montreal in 1760, the waiting people pushed up the Merrimac and the Connecticut valleys, along all ways, to possess the land. Settlements multiplied, scores of grants were made and many towns were

incorporated. The new-comers took up the land in the region of the Great Lake on the east, and on the west the home-seekers pushed on as far as Lancaster.

Many came from Massachusetts, but the much larger and more influential part of the migration was from Connecticut. It was the Connecticut people that brought the name of Lebanon with them and settled all the region round about us today. They were a hardy, brave folk, and tenacious of their principles. Many of them were of strong minds, good habits, correct principles and possessed of a good common education. The great awakening had been especially strong in the region which the emigrants left. They were under the influence of the Edwardean theology and of Whitefield's preaching. Thus the doctrinal beliefs and the spirit of revival of the older churches were transplanted into a new state. Such people and such influences, uniting in the settlement of towns, ensured the early establishment of the institutions of religious and a ready co-operation with the special provisions for the erection of places of worship and the settlement of ministers, contained in all grants, both those of the proprietors and those of provincial governments. This tide of immigration, after increasing the population three-fold, slackened during the Revolution, which was followed by another inflow that increased the earlier settlements and moved on to a new frontier.

RESULTS OF THE MIGRATION.

The general character of the earlier migration we have described. It was connected with a movement in theology that was reinterpreting Calvinism, and had traditions of evangelistic fervor. There was no antagonism to the "New Light" preachers, but these people from the south had been accustomed to a well-trained and

intellectually competent ministry. They laid strong foundations that were full of promise for the state. How religion developed in these western communities, and what the moral and spiritual life was in detail will be set forth in the paper which is to follow, as it deals with the typical community of Lebanon.

An immediate result of the great migration, and one of paramount importance for the higher life of New Hampshire, was the founding of Dartmouth College. Eleazar Wheelock, the first president, had shown his evangelistic temper by taking part in the revival preaching of the earlier period. He had proved his missionary purpose and educational interest through his service in Moor's Indian Charity School. By the removal of this school to Dresden, now Hanover, in 1770, and by the opening of courses for white youth the province secured the collegiate school which the ministry of the old colony had failed to establish. The forty ministers sent out by Dartmouth to the towns of the state before 1800, became an influential factor in determining religious conditions.

THE VERMONT CONTROVERSY.

A less happy outcome of the new settlement was the jeopardizing of the integrity of New Hampshire's domain, and a long disturbance of the peace, which was inimical to spiritual growth and prosperity. The people of the new region had little in common with the old settlement, and intercourse and acquaintance was difficult to maintain. The people on either side of the Connecticut river were of the same ancestry. They had lived as neighbors and friends, cherishing the same customs and traditions in homes which they had but recently left. The river seemed to them no natural boundary, rather it was a natural feature that should bind in political union the kindred

who lived on either side. Thus the Vermont controversy grew up naturally enough, but to the consternation and chagrin of the older communities of the state. The lukewarmness of allegiance of the western towns resulted in a union of Vermont and western New Hampshire in the Cornish convention of 1778, and in the meeting of the Vermont legislature, at Charlestown in 1781, where forty-five towns of New Hampshire were represented. Men of Cornish and Lebanon and Hanover were prominent in this movement which came to a sudden end in 1782, through the good offices of President Washington. But a very unhappy state of society prevailed in towns where majorities had attempted to coerce minorities, which in turn sought the protection of New Hampshire. Party rage, high words, deep resentments were the effects of these clashing interests. Revolting towns did not return at once to a state of peace, and divisions and animosities existed for a long time.

PRESBYTERIANISM.

The standing order throughout the state during the period under consideration was Congregational, but Presbyterianism played a more important part in the religious life of the time than is ordinarily recalled. Probably as a result of the transplanted consociationism of Connecticut, twelve or more churches of Vermont and New Hampshire, in this upper region, constituted the Grafton Presbytery, which, it is said, President Wheelock's influence organized in 1771, and to which Presbytery the Dartmouth College Church belonged. Some records, as in the case of the Croydon church, make a distinction between the "Presbyterian mode of discipline as practiced in the Church of Scotland, and the principles and practices of the Grafton Presbytery." These Grafton churches in time changed

their names and their manners, and have long been known as Congregational.

Even the churches of lower Piscataqua were infected in 1785. At the suggestion of Dr. Haven, of the South Church, Portsmouth, the churches were called upon to answer the question: "May there not be some material alteration in our ecclesiastical polity, making nearer approaches to the Presbyterian form, for the honor of Christ and the edification of the churches." The churches evidently negatived the proposition, though four of them appeared to have gone over to some form of Presbyterianism for a time. These were the South Church, Portsmouth, and the churches in Dover, Kittery and Barrington.

In some places, as Chester and Pembroke, Congregational and Presbyterian churches existed together, naturally dividing communities; though we read in the records of one town: "During the above-named period we find nothing recorded of the Consociate church, but about fifty deaths, an unusual number for the time,—a solemn warning, perhaps, to the people of God to cease from ecclesiastical strife." In some communities, such as Hudson and Goffstown, strife between these two denominations existed to such an extent as to help unsettle the state of religion.

A legitimate and competent Presbyterianism was established at Londonderry, where a colony from Scotland formed a church in 1735, and built up a thriving community. Strong denominational influences went out from this center; other people from Scotland came to the state, and at least nine regular Presbyterian churches were organized. Four such churches remain with us today.

OTHER DENOMINATIONS.

The original proprietors of Piscataqua and their re-

tainers were Church of England men and royalists. The early worship was according to the usages of that church, but it came to an untimely end about 1642, at the hands of the incoming Puritans. In 1732, Queen's Chapel was built in Portsmouth, with help from England. In 1739, Arthur Brown was inducted as rector. Three-fourths of his salary was paid by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Ports. He was an able man, considerate of the poor, and strongly attached to the ceremonies of his church. He died in 1773, but had no successor until after the Revolution. In spite of the ardent churchmanship of Benning Wentworth, his grants of land, and the English missionary money, only four Episcopal churches had been gathered by the end of the century. One was at Holderness, where the distinguished Samuel Livermore built his estate in 1774; one was the Cornish church, organized in 1793; the fourth was the church in Claremont, made up of Connecticut people and destined to be the progenitor of the only Roman Catholic Church of native stock in New England.

Though Quaker women had been driven out of New Hampshire tied to the tail of a cart, yet those persistent and admirable people had established at least six meetings, one inland at Weare and the others in the older settlements near the coast.

The Baptists, who had also been objects of suspicion and persecution, organized a church at Newton in 1750, and had gathered seventeen churches by the end of the century, having formed a State Association in 1785.

The culmination of the contest between the old order, represented by the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches, and the development of denominational life now of great importance in the state, belongs to the beginning of the next century; but the period after the

Revolution marks the beginning of the rise of sects, and consequently it was a trying time for the guardians of the established faith. "Flaming sectarian exhorters" intruded themselves on the preserves of the settled ministers, weakened their churches, discredited their authority, and aroused their holy wrath.

One of Robert Sandeman's three American churches was organized in Portsmouth, in 1765. In the same city, in 1780, a Universalist Church was formed. Only four others came into existence by 1800, but there was a widespread proclamation and discussion of the doctrines of Universalism, variously held by its different opponents. Considerable interest in Universalism existed in the southwestern part of the state, and the first general convention of the denomination was held at Winchester in 1796. Methodism had but one church in the state until 1800, the church in Chesterfield formed in 1794. Itinerant preachers had been moving through the state and were heard in Portsmouth as early as 1780. The religious chronicles of one town at a later period reads: "Methodism made some progress and Orthodoxy had but a slight hold upon the people—with what effect on their eternal interests time will evince." The eternal status of those people has not been revealed as yet, but we are more hopeful of Methodism than was the early scribe.

"THE FREE WILLERS."

The most vital and widely influential religious movement in this period was that which resulted in the formation of the Free Will Baptist denomination. The movement was led by a passionate and intrepid soul, and was utterly sincere. In agony of spirit and desiring to be taught of God, Benjamin Randall walked the rocks of New Castle, looking out upon the sea that he had sailed

as a fisherman. Neither the Congregational nor the Baptist fellowship satisfied him. He found no real welcome and response until he came to New Durham, where in 1780 a church was formed, from which mighty tides of spiritual power went forth; and which mothered the hundreds of ardent confessors, dwelling in the region of the Great Lake. After a long period, and with reluctance, these confessors formed themselves into the seventeen Free Will churches that existed in 1801. This movement had some of the strange if not reprehensible features that appeared in the great religious revivals of the southwest; but in it all there was ample occasion for surprise and heart searching on the part of the regular ministry, as well as for the resentment and contempt to which they too often gave vent. Three groups of the early "Free-willers" were turned aside by the successors of Ann Lee, who left as a result of their work in this state the two Shaker communities, one at Enfield and one at Canterbury.

A review of these other religious forces of the period makes it evident that the Congregational and Presbyterian churches, numbering 44 in 1750 and 138 in 1800, were the main sources of religious influence throughout the half-century.

THEOLOGICAL TENDENCIES.

In theology, as elsewhere, the period was one of development and change, attended with discussions, some of which were marked by sharpness, if not bitterness. The movement in religious thought took its rise from the Great Awakening, and doctrinal discussion has been said to be "the most permanent fruit of that event." It is not easy to differentiate the tendencies of thought, or to classify men under them. The conservative men, holding to the earlier type of theology, were known as Old Cal-

vinists, and were found widely scattered through the churches. The liberals, usually called "Arminians," some of whom came to be known as "Arians," were of eastern Massachusetts. The Edwardeans, who under the pressure of liberalism were working out a modified Calvinism and were divided into several schools, were largely of western Massachusetts and Connecticut. The appellation "New Lights" survived as the designation of the friends of Whitefield. They became largely identified with the Edwardeans. In the earlier days many opposers of Whitefield, when called "Arminians" retorted by calling the other party "Antinomians." All these theological tendencies may be discovered in the churches of New Hampshire at this time, and the ministers and people were not always able to see eye to eye. The name of Wheelock was a tower of strength to the orthodox in the new region of the West. Calvinism in some form, and New Light sympathies were strong among the people whose training and traditions were of Connecticut. The champions of Old Calvinism were found among the older settlements, usually having strong representation in the Presbyterian fields. Whitefield made three visits to lower eastern New Hampshire. He was given a hearing in both the Portsmouth churches, but the Odllins, of Exeter, so opposed him that a New Light church and preacher resulted. Ten ministers of the Piscataqua Association are on record as expressing themselves in favor of Whitefield, but others were bitter against him, and the omission of prominent names from the record makes it evident that the association as a body could not come to a conclusion. Among the ministers of the older settlements it is clear not only that there were men of Catholic temper, but also that there were a good many who are to be classed as Arminians. Among these are some of the older men, Timothy

Walker, Jeremy Belknap, Samuel Haven, Jeremiah Fogg and Benjamin Stevens. The movement of thought finally culminating in the division of the Congregational churches may be traced in New Hampshire, but as only four churches and two parishes took the Unitarian name, it is evident that an extreme liberalism was not widespread.

CHARACTER OF THE MINISTRY

In New Hampshire, as elsewhere, the censoriousness of Whitefield bore fruit that he must have regretted; and when we find the epithets, "Pharisees, Arminians, blind and unconverted," hurled at ministers, we need not always take the terms seriously. Unhappily, there are a few records that speak of conditions more deplorable than doctrinal lapses. At the close of the century, under a man of superior and brilliant talents, but loose morality, Dover sadly deteriorated. Two successive Presbyterian ministers at Peterboro, both from Scotland, "were orthodox in sentiment, but reprehensible in conduct, and their pestilent examples brought a blight on religion;" and in more than one instance an otherwise fair reputation was destroyed and fair hopes were defeated by a growing habit of intemperance. But the body of ministers in this period were men of high character and exemplary lives. They possessed native good sense and sound judgment, and many of them were men of distinguished talents. Forty-eight of the fifty-two settled ministers in 1764, and nine-tenths of the 199 ministers from 1748 to 1800 were college graduates. Of the latter, Harvard furnished 102, Yale 19, and Dartmouth 40. Candidates for the ministry gave much of senior year in college to books of divinity, and then read divinity for a year with some pastor of repute. At least seven New Hampshire ministers of this period had more or less divinity students under their in-

struction. These pastors were Langdon of Hampton Falls, McClintock of Greenland, Wood of Boscawen, Thayer of Kingston, Harris of Dunbarton, Parsons of Rindge, and Smith of Gilmanton. It may be that this same careful training made these ministers less able to reach that large number of people, who, at the end of the century heard the itinerant sectarian preachers gladly. In any case, among such people a prejudice grew up against the "college-educated" man, and when Samuel Hidden was to be installed at Tamworth, one woman declared when she saw him coming that she "had as lief see the devil." But these strong and well-trained ministers had been evangelists of liberty. They animated and held the people to their prolonged struggle with England. They "connected with an indissoluble bond the principles of civil government and the principles christianity." They preached sermons in which religion and politics were closely united. Samuel McClintock of Greenland, with his ministerial bands, is the central figure in historical pictures of the Battle of Bunker Hill. Ministers like Samuel Langdon, Paine Wingate, and Abel Foster of Canterbury, were worthy figures in state and national assemblies, while many like Josiah Stevens of Epping, made pecuniary sacrifices for the cause. The very few ministers who failed to prove themselves friends of their country were driven from their pastorates. The people of Bedford voted regarding John Houston, who remained a Tory: "Therefore, we think it not our duty as men or Christians, to have him preach to us any longer as minister."

CHURCH CUSTOMS.

The ministers were thought to be settled for life, and though ministerial changes were frequent in a few towns,

yet, in spite of many occasions for contention, the pastoral office was highly regarded. The average pastorate of the period was twenty-five years, and sixteen pastors of this period held office for forty-five years or more. The ministers in the new towns were given a share of the land, and usually the new minister had a "settlement" of a substantial sum as well as his salary. The salaries ranged from sixty to one hundred pounds. Joseph Buckminster in his wealthy parish never had over \$700 a year. In the troubled times salaries were reckoned in commodity values. In those days the church in Londonderry appropriated 5,000 pounds for annual expenses, and Dr. McClure of North Hampton, one year, had a salary of \$12,000. The ministers complained that "they prophesied in sack cloth." Mr. Shepperd, of Dublin, begged his people not to increase his salary as "it plagued him to death to collect what they had already agreed upon."

In those days the meeting house was the important building of the town and served for civic as well as religious gatherings. The location of the meeting house was always an important consideration, and often embroiled and divided communities. These buildings were usually centrally located, though a Raymond man once advertised: "Found, a stray meeting house in the woods." In the meeting houses there was preaching morning and afternoon on "Lord's day." The Lord's supper was observed once a month, or once in two months, sometimes being altogether omitted during winter. These services, together with the sacramental lecture, the quarterly and occasional fasts, and the catechising of children, made up the stated duties of the minister outside of his pastoral visitation. The hymns, the prayer, and the sermon constituted the order of worship, which was usually long enough at that. The public reading of the scriptures be-

gan to be agitated at the end of the century. During the period "deaconing" of the hymns was abandoned, causing many heart-burnings and some lasting dissensions.

STATE OF RELIGION.

This review of religious conditions has disclosed something of the state of religion which accompanied these conditions. In the nation at large, following the French and Indian War, there was a perceptible relaxation in morals, and religion suffered a serious decline. After the Revolution the state of morals and religion was lower than at any time in the nation's history. What was true of the nation was measurably true of New Hampshire. The agitation which preceded the war, the concentration of interest and effort in waging the war, the troublesome times of readjustment in government and in business, the lax habits of men returning from the army, were all detrimental to the upbuilding of the life of the Spirit. Scepticism and the so called French infidelity appeared in New Hampshire, but while Congress disagreed with Franklin, who thought prayers for divine help necessary, we find that the New Hampshire legislature, of 1784, was opened with solemn services in the North Church at Portsmouth, and such continued to be the custom.

The half-way covenant, which had generally prevailed in the churches, gradually fell into disuse. Under the best conditions the custom had bound the church and family life together, and built up a strong church interest, but there had been a failure in developing vital and experimental religion. Men did not follow on into the full membership of the church, and while congregations were large, the real membership of the churches was surprisingly small.

After his first visit at Portsmouth, Whitefield records with evident dejection, that he was given "a polite auditory, but so very unconcerned that I began to question whether I had been speaking to rational or brute creatures." Dr. Shurtleff, of the South Church, describes a season of revival that came soon after, and even "Portsmouth, where politics and pleasure divided the heart of the people," had its religious life greatly reinforced just before 1750. Perhaps as an after result, when the two old churches grew cold there was formed the Independent Congregational Church, in 1761. This was after the type of those strict churches founded in Connecticut, usually by persons of humble circumstances, who warm-hearted and spiritually-minded, cared not for an educated ministry. This church under two devout and excellent men lived on through the century and bore many marks of the simple New Testament church life.

Nearly all of New England east of the Berkshires and the Green Mountains was exempt from revival influences from 1745 to 1800, and we read that there were less than ten revival ministers in New Hampshire when Isaiah Potter was settled at Lebanon. Dartmouth College and the region for twenty miles around had seasons of revival between 1771 and 1788. Hollis, Plymouth, a child of Hollis, and the vicinity of New Ipswich report one or more seasons of refreshing the latter part of the century. Unhappy contentions and dissensions sprung up in not a few religious communities which made it impossible for them to grow in love to God and man. These troubles had their origin in political and doctrinal prejudices, in neighborhood jealousies, in an intense individualism, and in the revolt against the standing order. The Constitution of 1784 provided, "that every individual has a natural and inalienable right to worship God according to the dictates

of his own conscience and reason," but because this right was confined to Christians, and because the churches were still supported by taxation, there was too little practical toleration to guarantee peace.

STATE OF EDUCATION.

Education, the handmaid of religion, languished in the half-century. "There was a great and criminal neglect on the part of towns in complying with the law providing for the general education of the people. During the war, many towns large and opulent and far removed from any danger of the enemy, were for a large part of the time destitute of any public school." These facts may bear a causal relationship to some religious tendencies that appeared in the last years of the century. Certainly the neglect of education boded no good to that type of religious life which believed that the church and the school house should stand side by side.

About 1770, Simeon Williams opened a private school at Windham, which had an enrollment of forty or fifty pupils, and which became a feeder for Dartmouth. Exeter was not founded until 1781, and to this seven other academies were added in the last decade of the century, a fact full of promise for a better future.

STATE OF MORALS.

The state of morals at this time made it evident that a better future was needed. While slavery was disappearing, many aspects of social life and expression were rude and harsh enough, and very little of the compassion of Christ was visited upon the unfortunate or the criminal.

Intemperance was one of the greatest faults of the period, especially in the neighborhood of the Piscataqua, and on the old frontier, where lumbering was the princi-

pal industry. The drinking habits of all classes, the ministry included, hung like a dead-weight on the churches, and ordinations were often seasons of copious drinking. We have it on the highest authority that a free indulgence in gaming, excessive drinking, and such like dissipations endangered the careers of the bright men up and down the western river, as well as the careers of the men of the older settlement. Extreme lawlessness, attended with malicious destruction of private and public property is recorded of some places near the close of the century. Yet public virtue triumphed in the face of all assaults made upon it, and the virtuous were so numerous that they provided a sure channel through which the honorable traditions and the spiritual treasures of the past moved on to nourish a generation whose public service was to be less difficult, and whose religious life was more evident and probably more real.

THE GOOD OLD TIMES.

Did the years we have been considering constitute the period of the good old times in New Hampshire? To us gathered here today those times appear strange and remote enough. In its intense activity, in its fortitude and expectancy that half century was a good time. In that an undaunted fatherhood and an abounding and sacrificial motherhood established this commonwealth on her hills and in her valleys, it was a good time. In that men and women obeyed to go out unto a place that they should receive as an inheritance, and went out not knowing whither they went, it was a good time. In that they laid broad foundations and endured as beholding the invisible; in that they greeted the better future from afar and sacrificed for it, it was a good time. But God hath "provided some better thing concerning us, that apart from

us they should not be made perfect." Today, on my part, I recall with reverence the notable men of the ancient Piscataqua region. I unite with you who represent the upper part of old Strafford, and you from old Hillsboro and Cheshire, as you in memory do honor to your heroes of faith. We all join with you who make this occasion possible in your tribute to the worthy forbears of Grafton with its North Country, a race who made this region a land of promise, and established a beacon-light at Hano-
ver not to be extinguished.

Far off, o'er wide Elysian fields,
In joy beyond our mortal ken,
Or on God's ways of high emprise,
They fare, the elder Hampshire men.
No longer seers with straining eyes,
Vexed by a vision yet to be,
Now in the Kingdom of God's love,
As they are seen they also see.
Their ample mantle on us fall,
That we who serve earth's latest day
With widening view and changing phrase,
Be to the vision true as they.



Historic Sketch of Early Life of Lebanon, its First Church and Pastor, 1761-1817

DELIVERED ON THE SPOT WHERE THE FIRST RELIGIOUS
SERVICES WERE HELD IN TOWN. BY
REV. JOHN E. WHITLEY.

After the destruction of Louisburg in 1758, William Dana and three companions, Connecticut soldiers, came across Maine to the Connecticut river, designing to follow the river to their homes. In passing thro' this region they found much to admire and consequently a company was formed.

In 1760 eighty-two persons, the majority of whom resided in Lebanon and Mansfield, Connecticut, associated together and obtained from Benning Wentworth, the royal governor, the charter of this town bearing date July 4, 1761. That same year sixty charters were granted on the west side of the Connecticut river and eighteen on the east side of the river. The charter of Enfield and of Hanover, New Hampshire, is dated on the same day as that of Lebanon, and also Hartford and Norwich, Vermont. The charter gives these interesting items: The town was to be six miles square, and as soon as there should be fifty families resident in the town, they were to have the privilege of holding two annual fairs; and a market might be opened and kept one or more days each week. Every grantee for every fifty acres in his share should plant and cultivate five within five years; all white and other pine trees, fit for masting and the royal navy,

should be reserved for that purpose. Also for the space of ten years one ear of Indian corn was to be paid annually as rent, if lawfully demanded, and the first payment to be made on December 25, 1762. One whole share of land, about 338 acres, was reserved for the society of the Propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts; one whole share for a glebe for the Church of England, and one whole share for the first settled minister, one for the benefit of schools, and five hundred acres for the use of Benning Wentworth, the royal governor. There were sixty-three grantees; and the majority of these were from Lebanon, Connecticut. It is interesting to know that President Wheelock, Dartmouth's first president, was the pastor of the Lebanon Congregational Church in Connecticut, and that many of the grantees were his parishioners.

September 1, 1762, there was a committee appointed by the proprietors, composed of Captain Nathaniel Hall, Mr. John Hanks and Mr. John Birchard, to lay out a horse road from the old fort, number four, now Charlestown, to Lebanon. At the beginning of the settlement the country between here and Charlestown was not sufficiently open to admit the passage of a horse. The settlers came up the Connecticut river, and the first families with their goods came in boats from Charlestown. To Charlestown the early settlers of Lebanon went for several years for their milling. On one occasion, because the mills at Charlestown were not in running order, a Lebanon pioneer was obliged to go to Montague, Mass., a distance of ninety miles. He was away three weeks. His family concluded he was drowned. But the canoe came in sight freighted with the cargo for the colony, and the settlers had a day of rejoicing.

The first town meeting recorded was held May 15, 1765. In that first town meeting it was voted that a

minister should come and preach during the summer and that Aaron Storrs should take around a subscription paper and that the selectmen should seek quarters for the minister and provide for his accommodation. Ministers were called to labor here for a stated period, sometimes a few months and sometimes for one or two years. Mention is made in the town records of Rev. Mr. Treadway, Rev. Mr. Wales, and Rev. Mr. Niles. Since the minister was a town officer, taxes were raised for his support and all the affairs pertaining to the ministry were brought before the town meeting.

The old burying ground was laid out in 1765. It is said to be the oldest north of Charlestown. The first adult burial was that of Mr. Oliver Davidson, and the first young man to be buried there was Mr. Ezra Perkins. The first male child born in town was Thomas Waterman. The first family to settle here permanently was that of William Downer, himself, wife and eight children. The population of the town in 1765, was about 150. The population in 1768 was 162, as follows: 42 persons, males, over 16 and under 60; 50 persons under 16; married women, 30; and unmarried, including children, 40.

A new enterprise was engaging the minds of the settlers, the organization of a church. It is recorded that the six men of the organized effort were Azariah Bliss, Jonathan Dana, Joseph Dana, Zacheus Downer, John Slapp and John Wheatley. Azariah Bliss was from Connecticut, and became useful in all town affairs. Jonathan and Joseph Dana were from Ashford, Conn., Joseph being one of the grantees. Zacheus Downer was a public spirited man and later on was a soldier in the Revolution. John Slapp was from Connecticut, an officer in the French and Indian war, where he acquired the title of Major, and afterwards saw some service in the Revolution. Because of

his military knowledge and experience, he was of great service to the early settlers. John Wheatley was the son of an Irish surgeon in the British navy. Coming to this country while young he fell into the hands of a kind citizen of Norwich, Conn. Later he comes up the Connecticut valley and settles here. By his native ability and education he developed into a town leader. He was the first schoolmaster, the first justice of the peace under the royal commission, and for years was the legal adviser of the people.

Such men took upon themselves the organization of the first Congregational church formed in town, north of Charlestown, in the Connecticut Valley. The church gathered in the presence of Rev. Bulkley Olcott of Charlestown, and Rev. James Wellman of Cornish. It was organized September 27, 1768.

The town had not yet come to the settlement of an installed pastor. Supplies were engaged. Meetings were held in the log school house where John Wheatley taught and also at the private residence of Captain Joseph Wood.

The year 1772 stands out conspicuous in the church history of Lebanon. It was in this year when the town of about 300 inhabitants was ready to take definite and organized action in several matters. June 24, 1772, saw the small church adopting as its own articles of agreement, a confession of faith and a covenant. One of the articles of agreement reads, "the constitution of the church is to be what is commonly called Congregational." All this cooperative action was a preparation for the settlement of a pastor. The records inform us that on July 6, 1772, the church gave a call to Mr. Isaiah Potter to settle with them in the work of the gospel ministry. The ordination services took place on the Eastman lot, now owned by N. S. Johnson on South Main street, West

Lebanon. As far as historical knowledge and tradition can aid us, it was on this lot of land on the east bank of the Connecticut river where the first religious meetings were held in Lebanon. Here was solemnized the first public wedding in town. Here also, August 25, 1772, Rev. Isaiah Potter, the first settled pastor, was ordained. In the open air, under a large spreading elm, a temporary platform was built and the impressive service was held. The visiting clergymen were Rev. Bulkley Olcott of Charlestown and Rev. James Wellman of Cornish, and in addition to these, President Wheelock, Dartmouth's first president, and appointed delegates from Hanover were present. Dartmouth College was founded in 1769, and Dartmouth College church organized in 1771. John Wheatley, Esquire, spoke in behalf of the church, reading the original invitation. It is interesting to know that the town in early days voted to give 1,400 acres of land to President Wheelock for use of the college.

Isaiah Potter, born in Plymouth, Conn., July 23, 1746, became a student at Yale college and a fellow student of Dr. Nathaniel Emmons, under the theological training of Dr. John Smalley. Came to preach in Lebanon in the summer of 1771, and the following summer he was called to become the settled pastor. Two considerations induced to bring him here. Influence of Dr. Smalley and the acquaintance of Dr. Wheelock. Two of his brothers were ministers.

The next enterprise was the building of a church but upon the location of it the people could not agree. But the pastor was now their leader and after the earnest remonstrance of the young pastor, harmony prevailed, and it was finally decided to build the church on the portion of the field, west of the Luther Alden place, near the old burial ground, on the north side of the road.

October 29, 1772, at a church meeting legally warned, Mr. Joseph Dana was chosen as the first deacon, and the first sacrament in the town of the Lord's Supper was administered in the first meeting house on November 15, 1772.

In this meeting house, which stood for twenty years, the early settlers met Sunday after Sunday in a simple form of worship, with Ziba Huntington as chorister, Joseph Dana as deacon, and with that earnest and faithful pastor known as Priest Potter, who, like Moses, was a leader of his flock forty years in this wilderness. The first meeting house was an old-fashioned building, 48 feet in length and 34 feet in breadth and the posts that supported the room inside were 12 feet high. It is recorded on the inside cover of the church records that the Congregational church at West Lebanon was organized within 100 rods of the place where the first church of Lebanon was organized and within 200 rods from where the old meeting house stood. Joseph Wood, an old resident church member was ninety years old the very day the West Lebanon Church was organized, November 3, 1849, and was present also at the organization of the first church in 1768. He lived from 1759 and died in 1859 a centenarian.

In the reading of the records during Priest Potter's ministry, one soon perceives that the church paid scrupulous attention to particular cases of discipline which resulted in some instances in excommunicating the persons charged with breaking a commandment or with a breach of the covenant. Several cases I will give later. July 24, 1777, was observed as a public fast day on account of the distress of the war and the near approach of the enemy after Ticonderoga was given up. Several years pass by and the church votes that the Psalms be sung in public worship without reading but hymns for want of books should be sung line by line. The first chorister mentioned

is Enoch Reddington who was chosen to lead the singing, and Ziba Huntington was the second chorister to serve the congregation. He was appointed March 7, 1782. At the same meeting a Mr. Waters was called upon to build a communion table. On the Lord's day, April 28, 1782, fifty-two persons united on confession of faith, doubtless the fruit of a revival led by the pastor who was regarded as one of the successful revivalists in the state. One may judge of the sentiment held by the good people of this town in those early years, from an item under date of March 3, 1784. It reads as follows: "Voted, that the church view it unbecoming the profession of godliness for young people, professors, to practice frolicing and vain mirth, likewise for elderly persons, to indulge in idleness, in foolish talking and jesting; and voted that they should set a watch about themselves and in the future refrain." After almost twenty years standing the old meeting house on the hill was partially destroyed and the timbers were bought by private residents, and the church was temporarily rebuilt near the residence of Henry Farnam. Says Rev. D. H. Allen, in a historical address delivered at the centennial of the charter of the town, July 4, 1861: "The fathers and mothers of some of us used to ride on horseback and in ox carts from the extreme north-east corner of the town to the house of worship, but some refused to go there and were accustomed to meet in the house of Mr. Robert Colburn, which stood near Mr. Carter's residence. Our records inform us that the church voted to suspend those members for the present who were active in pulling down the meeting house."

The controversy of the building of a new meeting house as to location was finally settled by a proposition from Mr. Robert Colburn, who owned the land of the village, and who came forward and stuck a stake and

said: "If you will build the house on this spot, I will give to the town so many acres of land for a public common." The proposition was accepted, and the town meeting house was built in 1792, and it stood on the common till 1850. Two hundred and four out of a population of five hundred were members of the church in 1784. During Priest Potter's ministry 372 names were inscribed upon the roll. The pastor was endowed with a splendid physique and possessed unusual strength. For a while he was chaplain of one of the New Hampshire regiments in the Revolution. He was in the army under General Gates and witnessed the surrender of Burgoyne, and stories are told of his strength and prowess. In mental power and grasp he was above the average. His ministry was crowned with success. Through his untiring efforts the church grew in numbers and had a great influence in this vicinity. After a long and useful life he died July 2, 1817, aged 71, having been connected with this parish as supply and settled pastor for about forty-five years. His death occurred on what is called the Breck place, now owned by Mr. Wells.

Lebanon has furnished some thirty candidates for the ministry, among whom are Rev. Samuel Wood, D. D., of Boscawen, Rev. Walter Harris, D. D., of Dunbarton, Rev. Experience Porter, Rev. Story Hibbard, missionary of the American Board, as teacher in the Protestant College at Beirut, Rev. George Storrs of New York, Rev. C. H. Fay of Providence, R. I., Rev. E. L. Magoon of Albany, and Rev. D. H. Allen, professor in Lane Theological Seminary, Rev. Elias H. Richardson, Rev. Charles Cutler, Rev. William Searles and Rev. Joshua Blaisdell of Beloit, Wisconsin, Benjamin Wood of Upton, Mass., Rev. Elwin House, D. D., and Rev. J. E. Ingham, great grandson of Priest Potter. From 1776 to 1861, there were fifty-four

graduates of Dartmouth who were from Lebanon, among whom were Samuel Wood of the class of 1779; Walter Harris, 1789; Joseph Peck, 1800; Experience Porter, 1803; Phineas Parkhurst and Constant Storrs, 1807; Ira Young, 1828; D. H. Allen, 1829; Benjamin Ela, 1831; Benjamin E. Gallup, 1847; Elias H. Richardson, 1850; and Samuel W. Dana, 1854.

Interesting facts are recorded about the building of the town meeting house on the common. The committee was composed of Stephen Billings, Joseph Wood, Daniel Hough, Captain Asher Allen and Samuel Estabrook. This committee reported December 24, 1792. The people had little money to give towards the building but they gave material and labor. Upon the subscription list so much money was set down opposite each name, but it was paid by wheat or lumber or stock or labor. Among the many subscriptions we find the following: A yearling heifer, one yoke of oxen, two cows, a pair of two-year-old steers, three creatures, one gallon of rum by three different persons, and seven and one-half gallons by one person. These are novel contributions towards the building of the town meeting house on the common, but the people gave what they had.

Another item of interest is the censuring of church members. What we now regard as matters for the individual conscience to decide, in those early years the town church decided. Here are several instances: One member was charged with raking hay on the Sabbath, which was to some of the settlers offensive. That member made a confession and asked forgiveness and was accepted again into membership. Another member was charged with gathering sap on the Sabbath. After making his confession, he was reinstated. The members who tore down the first meeting house were suspended and

the leader for this and other serious charges, was excommunicated. Another member was laid under the censure of the church for his unchristian conduct of card playing. Another was charged with neglecting family worship at evening, and also for sending his children to a dancing school and for embracing the sentiment of universal salvation, which was considered a departure from the faith. Not only the average member but officers and deacons and even the pastor were brought before trial. Good old John Wheatley was charged for slander, which was regarded a breach of the ninth commandment. On one occasion Priest Potter was charged with having practiced extortion in selling grain at an extravagant price during a time of scarcity. After the usual investigation had been made by the committee, it was found that the charge was groundless, and Priest Potter was freed.

Patty Hebard, Polly Waterman and Molly Estabrook made a confession to the church that they had joined in frolic and vain mirth at the wedding of Enoch Reddington, the chorister, and had also practiced frolic and vain mirth at the late commencement at Dartmouth, 1784. But the church records no case of censure of any member for drinking beer, rum or brandy.


Mr. Downs tells us that the early laws concerning the observance of the Lord's day were very strict. Some of the provisions of the law of 1799, are the following: "All labor except works of necessity and mercy, all games, play and recreation are forbidden; all travel on the Lord's day between sun rising and sun setting, unless from necessity or to attend public worship, visit the sick or do some office of charity, is prohibited." If any person on the Lord's day, within the walls of any house of public worship, or about such house, whether in the time of public service or between the forenoon and afternoon services of

said day, or any part thereof, did behave rudely or indecently, he or she must pay a fine, not exceeding six dollars nor less than fifty cents. There was a provision in the law to this effect: "that it shall and may be lawful for any justice of the peace, on application, to grant a license for any person to travel or do secular business on that day, which shall appear to him to be a work of necessity or mercy." At the close of the act it was recommended to the ministers of the gospel to read this act publicly in their congregations, annually on the Lord's day next after the choice of town officers.

The tything man, the parish officer, was especially charged with the enforcement of this law. The time when and the place where the tything man was most in evidence was in the meeting house galleries, during public worship, it being his duty to keep the young folks awake, but not too lively, and to keep them in good behavior. The tything man often carried a little rod, and when a boy or girl became unruly, they were brought to order by a tap from the rod. Sometimes ears were pulled and not gently. The law requiring the election of the tything man was repealed at the annual meeting of 1845.

One other item as to the growth of the town in population. In 1762 four men passed their winter here; in 1765 there is a population of 150; when the church was organized, 1768, there is a population of 162; in 1770, 195; in 1775, 347; in 1782, 500; in 1786, 843; in 1790, 1,180; in 1800, 1,574; and in 1819, 2,000.

Thus Priest Potter had seen the town grow from small beginnings and his influence and character was felt upon the whole life of Lebanon. His work abides and the citizens still admire him.



THIS MARKS THE SPOT
WHERE THE FIRST
MEETING HOUSE
STOOD IN THIS
TOWN
1772-1792
ERECTED 1908

The New England Church on the Hill.

ADDRESS BY REV. ROY B. GUILD OF BOSTON, MASS., MAY
20, 1908, DELIVERED ON THE SPOT WHERE THE
FIRST MEETING HOUSE IN LEBANON
STOOD FROM 1772 to 1792.

The traveller approaching Gibraltar, views with interest the rugged promontories of the European and African coast. He recognizes at once the appropriateness of the name of the gateway of the Mediterranean, the "Pillars of Hercules." As his ship approaches land, he discovers, upon each outstanding peak stretching to the north and to the south, a small tower. In the days when Spain was occupied by the Moors, these towers were used for the rapid transmission of messages, a sort of wireless telegraphy, smoke by day and fire by night, taking the place of electricity. The beacons on the mountains told of the advance or retreat of Mohammedanism.

The traveller in America, beginning in New England, sees the hills topped by the beacon lights of Christianity, the Churches. The first, planted on the shores of the Atlantic, has been followed by others, reaching to the Pacific. The New England church on the hill tells of the beginning of a great religious movement and the others tell of the progress. This is the story we are now to consider.

We have heard already of the early happenings in

this immediate community and commonwealth. From these records, we can gather the salient points.

The land for the church was, as a rule, the gift of the town. It was centrally located and thus considered to be at the most advantageous point. The building was erected by public grant and private gifts in the first instance. The raising of the building was a great event, rum often being the most ardent spirit for the day's work.

To secure the building was not always an easy task. There were stiff necked obstructionists then as now. As one of that period wrote: "The devil is a great enemy to building meeting-houses, and to the utmost of his power stirs up the corruptions of the children of God to oppose or obstruct so good a work." When they decided to build at Hadley, they could not determine on the location. The discussion lasted for thirteen years during fifty town meetings.

At Mendon, the quarrel over the erection of the church lasted three years. One side, becoming somewhat wearied, was captured by a proposition adopted in town meeting: "To provide a barrel of rum towards raising the meeting house." We do it now with church suppers. After the raising, some person attempted to cut down a corner post of the frame. The town was in such good spirits that it voted not to try "to find out who hath, by cutting, damnified the meeting house."

As a protest against ecclesiasticism, the building was made as unchurchly in appearance as possible. These buildings are known as the "barn-building" churches. The door was placed in the middle of the side and the pulpit was opposite this door. At each end were porches, by which the galleries could be reached. After a time, one of these porches was replaced by a pepper box steeple, which, in turn, gave way to the more elaborate

steeple of the Christopher Wren type or to double towers.

While these buildings of the second period were not as beautiful architecturally as the old English churches, they were so constructed that the man preaching in them could be heard. This was of primary importance in the mind of those who scorned ritual and loved instruction in doctrine.

The assignment of seats was a matter of great importance and was attended to by a committee. In some cases, if a man did not like his seat and sat elsewhere, he was fined. No attention was given to the comfort of the worshippers, so far as seats and atmosphere was concerned. We might add to this, also as far as conscience was concerned, judging from some of the sermons preached. Near the church were small private or semi-public rest houses, to which the worshippers retired for rest, sociability, food and warmth, while waiting for the second service.

The all important thing was the pulpit and the pulpit utterances. Upon the former, stood an hour glass, which was turned by the tithing man, as the running sand made it necessary, but this had no appreciable effect upon the length of the utterance.

The minister, in those rugged days, gave positive messages, for he was one of a determined people to whom life, here and hereafter, was a serious matter. The theology was stern and rigid. It produced in the minds of men profound convictions, without which they would not have accomplished some of the good things that they did. The soul was a precious thing. It needed to be saved, it could be saved, and they labored unto that end.

The religious work was the first interest in the meeting-house. But it was not the only interest. It became

the great political power because of the sermons preached and the meetings held therein. While the ministers wrought out elaborate systems of theology, which terrified the sinner and made the saints stand in awe, they also exalted man to that true level where he would call but one, Lord and Master. This meant the annihilation of monarchs and monarchies. The Declaration of Independence was the logical outcome of the service of the meeting house on the hill. These same sanctuaries heard the call to arms in the early sixties, being among the first to echo the plaintive wail of the slave.

Thus, for more reasons than one, we sing:

"I love thy rocks and rills,
Thy woods and templed hills."

Today, there is no sight which lingers longer in the memory of the visitor in New England than that of the dignified meeting-house gleaming forth in pure white from its background of dark green foliage. How its story thrills the mind and heart and arouses us to desire the full fruitage of its early life.

This, then, was the New England Church on the hill.

What of that church today. Two things can be said of it. In the first place, it is, in many cases, the solemn, silent, forsaken memorial of a noble past compelling us to forget the error in the thought of the true. As I have gone from one end of New England to the other, a stranger returning to the home of his father, I have been impressed with this fact.

Of the old settler, I ask the question: "What church is that so beautiful in situation?"

"It is the First Church of P——. It is rarely used now. It is kept in repair by the interest on \$4,000 endowment. Fifty years ago, the great horse sheds were full on

Sundays. Pews and galleries were crowded with worshippers. Now there are eighteen members, of whom sixteen are absent." "Ichabod" can be written over the entrance.

One of three things has happened. The new generation has moved away and the region is forsaken. Or the community has been reseeded by those of foreign birth, or, saddest of all, the present generation has degenerated into a stage of hopeless irreligion and moral destitution. There is more hope of filling these churches with the incoming virile foreign stock than of reviving this remnant. To be a missionary among such requires more courage than to go to a non-christian people.

To make matters worse, this remnant makes futile any effort to rescue the new inhabitants or to dispose of the property, turning it into available assets for the denomination. The national council has asked the Church Building Society to do this latter thing; a reasonable request, but almost impossible of execution.

As concerns the use of the building, I visited recently a neighborhood into which many Swedes had moved. Our church would soon be without worshippers. The remnant, not like that of prophetic language, the hope of Israel, but rather the despair of Congregationalism refused to let them use the building. It was necessary to erect a new one within scarcely a stone's throw of the almost forsaken but very substantial old one. Such actions are not as rare exceptions as one might expect to find, judging from the experiences of Home Missionary Superintendents.

True, Ephraim is wedded to his idol of independence. Thus, outside suggestions are tabooed, but let us try to create a public opinion that will make it possible for home missionary or church building officials to do what can be done to fulfill the plans and purposes of the founders and

builders.

Over against these cases are those where a faithful remnant and a godly pastor are doing heroic and unselfish service, seeking to stem the tide of worldly interest and vice or to make true men and women of the lately arrived pilgrims. Stand by your home missionary society as it stands by these, that the springs that have been the life of our city churches may not dry up. Let them still be the platforms of personal, social and political righteousness as of yore.

Again, many of these churches have become centres of our great cities, which are growing so rapidly that a westerner thinks he is at home in one of his own boom towns. I can only refer to these to remind you that some have been drowned out by the strange floods of life about them, while others upon these floods are fulfilling the mission of the church as our forefathers understood it.

In the second place, let us consider the New England church beyond the New England hills. Last week, my work called me to an old Connecticut town. There I found a fine old brick meeting-house with a great white portico. To make the picture complete, a great dogwood tree in full bloom stood out from the side of the church, backed by dull red, surrounded by the green of spring-time. At the close of the service, I learned that over sixty years ago a young man, who had earlier joined this church, was here ordained. With his fair young bride, he went west.

Six months ago, I spent a Sunday in a fine old church, high above the banks of the Fox River in Northern Illinois. New England was writ large over the entire structure. The church was erected during the pastorate of that young clergyman, the honored and revered Dr. G. S. F. Savage, now of Chicago. The present pastor and

wife, most of the officers and other members of that church are New Englanders or their children. Somewhere among these hills old homes are tenantless, but out there they are multiplying. These pioneers built first the tower on the hill top, where they have kept the beacon burning. Although many of these middle west communities are passing through the experience of the east, because of the arrival of those from further east, the first settlers going on to the west and northwest.

Out in a fine suburb of Los Angeles, I served a church as a summer supply. Its membership, growing and enthusiastic, was the off-shoot of the churches we have already named. The parent stock shows signs of old age and decay in spots, it is true, but it has seen well to its own propagation, save in one instance, the compact with the Presbyterians. That, however, has been a blessing. The injection of Congregational blood into that system has made it Congregational in local matters in practice. Its more central organization gave our noble-minded grandparents the opportunity to early plant a christian church of some sort. Denominationally, we do regret that 2,000 churches thus started are not to us a source of strength, but we can glory in their work.

Today, our duty is plain. We are organized, we have our agencies. There are two ways in which we can accomplish what the pilgrims left England to see accomplished.

New Englanders, their children and their grandchildren, living in and founding these communities, must first establish the church or be traitors to our best traditions but we must supplement their efforts.

We, who have inherited our church homes, can best show our appreciation of those who built for us by helping the builders elsewhere. Because our great-great-grandfathers deeded the land and our grandfathers built

our churches, we should do all the more for others; but, alas, this is the very reason why New England does less, along this line than any other. The average Congregationalist last year gave only a cent and a quarter a month toward paying last bills on churches and parsonages outside the immediate vicinage. They were born under the eaves of a church home and know nothing about the meaning of the want of such a home or the difficulty of securing one. Last year, our denomination jointly spent \$287,000 in such work. New England, with over a third of the total membership, gave only a seventh of the amount. The hungry man is the first to share his crust with one starving. Let us do more for others, though not church hungry, being rather church surfeited. On this very day, your directors, seated in New York, must notify seventy waiting churches, in the crisis of their life, that Congregationalists would rather see them wait and even fail than part with a small amount of the money they possess. You may not have looked at it in that way before, but it is the naked truth. Let us at least show our appreciation, even if we are not strikingly generous.

If we will build the beacon tower and the home for the kindler and keeper of the fire, the home missionary society will be able, with far greater efficiency and economy, to do its work, even to the retiring out of its decreasing debt. Shame on us for the retrenchment by which it has been decreased.

As we place this marker today, we accept this fact that rebukes us. At the same time, we accept the facts that inspire us. By the gracious gifts of those who have been appreciating our common agency, the Building Society has made it possible, in the last fifty years, to pay last bills on a thousand parsonages and four thousand churches. With true christian business care, the money

has been used to what glorious ends. In our commonwealth, we helped to build all but two churches. That is genuine Congregational fellowship. Let us multiply and magnify it, that in every unchurched community in our land, we may plant the church of the best type. The New England church on the hill, the social centre, the creator of public opinions, the inspirer of men, the true bride of our blessed Redeemer.

Those, who are engaged in doing this, can sympathize with their fellow laborer of a century and a half ago, who wrote: "The devil is a great enemy to building meeting-houses." It is our business to beat the devil; more easily said than done. His satanic majesty does not engage a man to try his ax on a corner post, but makes of a possible pillar of a church, a man devoted only to business or pleasure. He simply chloroforms with indifference those who should be producing results here and there. And so the work languishes. The progress of the church is no longer a question of wealth, but of willingness. There is enough wealth in the west to build the churches. Yes, and there is enough wealth in India to man our missions, but in neither case is it in the hands of those who feel the burden of responsibility. It is our sympathy with the loyal few that causes us to lend our assistance there. They and we must battle against the devil in his shrewd work, and so give the plant that will make permanent the influences that has enabled New England to put her stamp of religious liberty and political liberty upon all our land. Their very lack of understanding of things essential should arouse us to do more, just as the sin sickness of the world had the compelling influence upon Christ that lead him to say "I must." And it is as his followers, I take it, that we are gathered here today. Thus we will do honor to the memory of those

who built the first church on the hills of New England, and perpetuating their work and bless generations unborn. Unto this end our fathers labored. Shall we be less noble, less generous, less christian? No.

Historic Spots as Reminders.

ADDRESS DELIVERED MAY 20, ON THE SPOT WHERE THE
FIRST CHURCH STOOD FROM 1772 to 1792. SPEAKER,
REV. CYRUS RICHARDSON, D. D., OF NASHUA.
SUBJECT, HISTORIC SPOTS AS REMINDERS.

MR. PRESIDENT, BRETHREN AND FRIENDS:—

We are living in a transitional period of the world's history. We are passing out of the old into the new,—out of old customs into new customs, out of old thoughts into new thoughts, out of old experiences into new experiences.

Change is written everywhere,—in New England, in the Middle States, and on the Pacific slope of our own country, and in the old empires of the far East.

A short time ago it was my privilege to visit the museum at Honolulu, where I saw a rare collection of articles which represented the life of the Hawaiian people when their country was a barren desert,—rude implements with which they delved in the soil, rude weapons with which they went into battle, primitive huts in which they lived.

Then I passed out into the splendid city with its wide streets, tree-lined, its comely parks, its great business blocks, its fine churches and well equipped school-houses, its telegraphs and telephones and electric railways; and I said: "What a magnificent change has been here wrought within seventy-five years!"

A few weeks later, in Tokio, Japan, I visited another museum, looked upon a still rarer collection of articles which belonged to ancient life, and then went out into the spacious avenues of the great metropolis, profoundly

impressed with a similar contrast between the ancient and modern.

Within a couple of generations that whole island empire has passed out of a state of semi-barbarism, and stepped straight into the forefront of the world's civilization.

Go where you will today among the peoples of the earth, you will be struck with the fact of change.

This change has to do with business methods, with social customs, with military achievements. It is seen in work shops, on farms, in school-rooms and in churches. Commerce, science, government, medical practice, and theology have been transformed within a century.

And the end is not yet. Forward, is humanity's motto. Forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth to those which are before, we still press toward a distant goal.

The ancient prophets assumed an expectant attitude; so did the apostles, so did the early Christians, and so do we.

But when we pass out of an age, we do not cut aloof from it. A single event is not an isolated fact, but is connected with what has gone before and with what comes after.

A single person is not in himself a finished product. A single generation is not an unrelated unit.

As the parts of a tree are not joined externally like the timbers of a house, but have a common life passing through them to make them one, so generations of men become a single body through the possession of a common life.

Hence, as one writer has well said: "History is the story of the race and not of separate individuals.

"It is the exhibition of the common nature of man as

this is manifested in that great series of individuals which is crowding on, one after another, like the waves of the sea through the ages of time.

"The fact is that no one mind is capable of accomplishing alone what the race is destined to accomplish by the slow revolution of the cycle of existence.

"No age is historic by itself. Like the individual it only contributes its share of investigation to the sum total of material which is to undergo the test, not of an age, but of the ages."

We who live today began our work where those who preceded us left it. We do our part, and pass the product on to those who come after us.

This law of progress puts the treasures of all the past ages at our disposal. *For us* Homer and Shakespeare and Bryant and Whittier wrote their poems. *For us* Handel and Mozart and Beethoven their music.

For us Raphael and Titian and Rembrandt painted their pictures. *For us* Washington and Lincoln and McKinley guided our ship of state through fierce storms.

For us such men as the pioneers and early pastors of this historic church lived and acted and spoke.

Whatever, therefore, serves to bring us into direct touch with men like these is of inestimable value.

Historic spots have always been cherished as reminders. When the Israelites had crossed the Jordan to enter the Promised Land they took stones from the bed of the river, and with them built a monument to commemorate God's mercies.

And Joshua said, "When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones? then ye shall let your children know that Israel came over this Jordan on dry land."

When Jacob had his superb dream, in which he saw

the great staircase reaching from earth to heaven with angels ascending and descending thereon, and Jehovah speaking to him in words of promise, saying, "The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed, and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Jacob took the stone that he had put under his head, and erected it as a memorial of divine favor."

When in Samuel's day God had given the Israelites a splendid victory over the Philistines, Samuel took a stone and set it up, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, "Hitherto the Lord hath helped us."

At the three spots at which the British army practically failed in its first attempts to meet the American colonists in battle, memorials have been placed, first, the magnificent granite shaft on Bunker Hill; second, the stone on the village green at Lexington where a handful of brave men remained at their post; and third, the Minute Man at Concord Bridge, where the "Embattled farmers stood, and fired the shot heard round the world."

New England is literally dotted with memorials of heroic achievements. During recent years the Daughters of the American Revolution have deserved our gratitude for their erection of many commemorative tablets.

Churches also have had a share in these attempts to keep in perpetual remembrance notable persons and places and events.

Now these monuments are connecting links between the past and the future. They conserve the spirit of the days gone by.

They bring that which is richest and best of former generations down into the present, and carry it forward into the years ahead.

They show us our indebtedness to our ancestors, reminding us of the priceless legacy which has been be-

queathed to us, and provoking in us a spirit of gratitude. They inspire us with buoyant hope, telling us that what has been done once may be done again, that former triumphs are omens of triumphs to come.

They give us vision, assuring us that we do not live in one little day and place, but are citizens of the ages and the whole world.

They say to us, Lift up your eyes, and behold your relationship with both the past and the future.

They prompt us to renewed efforts for the good of mankind, saying, "Freely ye have received; freely give."

Unworthy sons of noble sires you would be, did you not increase the legacy that has been left to you, and pass it on to those who come after you.

These monuments cheer us with the thought that through all the changes that are taking place, there is something that is unchangeable, amid all the transitoriness, there is much that is permanent.

What lessons will your children find in these stones which we today dedicate? I mention three.

The first has to do with freedom,—the freedom which has dominated New England life, and through New England life, has dominated our great country.

Those early settlers said, "Neither kings, nor popes, nor bishops shall dictate our beliefs."

In political and church affairs every man shall have a vote. The government shall be of the people, and by the people, and for the people. This is the choicest legacy which the colonists handed down to their descendants. That spirit of freedom has spread throughout the country. It has gone across the ocean, and awakened the people of the Orient.

That spirit is today being proclaimed the world round. Men everywhere are saying, We will not be bound;

we will not be oppressed; we will no longer tamely submit to tyrannical rule.

The second lesson which your children will receive as they ask, "What means these stone tablets?" has to do with the nobility of sacrifice.

Those men and women who here worshipped were swayed with a lofty purpose. They had neither time nor inclination for a life of self-indulgence. They willingly surrendered ease and luxury.

They endured hardships; they faced perils; they stood fearlessly at posts of duty.

Life was both serious and strenuous. The winsome graces of Christianity were not conspicuous.

But the rugged virtues shone with unwonted lustre. The times called for heroic deeds. The spirit of sacrifice was wrought into the very fibre of our ancestors. Again and again, in seasons of catastrophe, it has saved the church and the country.

The third lesson to be found in these tablets pertains to the doctrine of personal accountability to God.

Those early worshippers who feared neither king nor pope, *did* fear Jehovah. His word was supreme. Their constant watch cry was, "Thus saith the Lord."

The minister was regarded as God's mouthpiece. This doctrine made them fearless. "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

It made them serious. If God looks down upon us, frivolities are out of place. It made them earnest. They felt that they were building for God and eternity.

And so, my friends, we today dedicate these tablets to the memory of men and women whose names we honor, and whose virtues we try to emulate.

Here they worshipped Jehovah. Here they heard his voice. Here on each returning Lord's day they im-

bibed afresh that spirit of freedom and sacrifice and accountability which they bequeathed to us as a rich inheritance.

These tablets will continue to speak long after your lips are silent. Age will make them eloquent.

For your children and children's children their story will always be fresh and beautiful and new.

The Layman's Part in Church Building

ADDRESS DELIVERED BY WM. S. CARTER, LEBANON, MAY 20,
1908, ON THE SPOT WHERE THE FIRST CHURCH STOOD,
FROM 1772 TO 1792.

As a representative of the laymen, I have been requested to speak of the part taken by them in the building of our churches. The cares and activities of a business life, the application necessary to make a success of one's business with the sharp competition on every hand, do not prepare the layman to give as much thought to the spiritual work of the church as he ought, but when the opportunity is offered him to work in a way for which he is fitted by his every day business life, like the building of churches, he may be relied upon to come to the front and make himself useful. In going back to the early history of the world, we learn that when Moses wished to construct a tabernacle for the worship of Jehovah, it was the people who brought gold, silver, and purple and fine linen and skilled artificers, and workmen who wrought to weave and rear the tent in which the priests should lead them in worship. When the temple was to be built in Jerusalem, it was laymen, albeit kings, to whom the task was entrusted. The cathedral builders, the greatest architects of the world, have devoted their talents to designing and erecting magnificent churches. Bramante and Michael Angelo, the laymen, made St. Peters the glory of Rome.

"In the elder days of art,
Builders wrought with greatest care
Each minute and unseen part;
For the gods see everywhere."

It was Sir Christopher Wren, the builder of St. Pauls, of whom it was said, "If you wish to see his monument look about you." In our own country it was Richardson, the layman, who designed, and the business men of Boston who furnished the means to erect that beautiful edifice, in which the memory of Phillips Brooks, the preacher, is enshrined. Our forefathers built no cathedrals, no Trinity churches, but the little white meeting houses that dotted our New England hills and valleys bear witness to the same religious spirit, the same self sacrifice, the same consecration of time and talent and money. It will be conceded by all that the financial aid which laymen are able to give, is of the utmost importance to the success of the church. We are gathered today to dedicate a memorial to the members of the church of this town, who chose this sightly location overlooking the beautiful valley of the Connecticut on which to build their first meeting house. The appreciation of the importance of suitably marking every historic spot is especially noticeable in these days. I am reminded of another memorial which it was my privilege to assist in placing only a short time ago, in the great Mississippi valley to New Hampshire soldiers, who took part in one of the great battles of the Civil war. They were brave and patriotic, and earned the right to live in history through the dangers and sufferings they endured. The men of whom we speak today, deserve no less of us. They were men of strong convictions, and wise in their day and generation, for they early appreciated the need of a church, with all it vouchsafed to them of comfort, cour-

age and hope. We are justified in claiming that many of them were soldiers who had seen actual service on the field of battle, for among other names chosen as a committee to locate the second meeting house, we find those of Col. Elisha Payne, Maj. Nat. Wheatley, Capt. David Hough and Lt. Robert Colburn. The best soldiers are those who place their trust in a Divine Being, and the most active and devoted laymen are those who have been preserved through great dangers. Many of the men of that day were like Peter and John at the beautiful gate of the temple, who when asked for alms answered "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have I give thee."

Mr. Downs, a former pastor of the church, tells us that their subscription to the church was paid in wheat, lumber, stock and labor, and that among others the following were contributed: a yearling heifer, one yoke of oxen, two cows, one yearling heifer, a pair of two-year old steers, one yearling bull, three creatures, one gallon of rum by three different individuals, seven and a half gallons by one person. The time has long since past when religion expresses itself only through prayers, fasts and sacraments. Some one has said that, "The church has a new social consciousness; a mission to the community in which its lot is cast." Practical christianity manifests itself in business ways. In the devotion of time and thought, and earnest effort to the successful administration of financial affairs of the church. Church buildings are no longer the simple places of worship of former years. The evolution of the social life of the church calls for enlarged accommodations and where regular parish houses cannot be afforded, Sunday School rooms, parlors, and kitchens must be provided in the church buildings. Here the business sagacity of the men and the judg-

ment and taste of the women is given full play. The history of the Congregational Church Building Society during the fifty-five years of its existence, under the leadership of its distinguished group of presidents, who have been clergymen of national reputation, has given the laymen the opportunity to contribute large sums for a worthy object. To this call they have responded nobly, having contributed for church and parsonage building more than five million dollars. The amount of good accomplished it is hard to estimate. Most of this work has been done in the great West, but the East has not been overlooked, and in our own state many needy churches have been helped. Our attention has recently been called to the fact that in the back towns of our own state, religion is at a very low ebb, and the inhabitants of these towns are allowing the churches which their forefathers built to stand unused. Mr. Thurber of Danbury, who has interested us so much in this subject, is not a clergyman but a layman, giving his best effort to settlement work almost at our door. He informs us that there is urgent need of this work in order that men and women who are now indifferent may become interested in sustaining these churches. The church stands for the purer, higher, better life. It brings to us the only hope of a future existence. To be associated in the work of this grand institution, should be the aim of all who desire to make the most of their lives and secure for themselves the promise of the Master for faithful service.

May we be as wise to discern how we may employ our time and means for the good of others, as were the men whom we honor today in the dedication of this marker. We know not what the future has in store for us but may the laymen so wisely build, and the clergymen preach that the churches may be adapted to the

needs of the coming generation; that the great principles which the Prince of Peace came to teach, may be implanted in the hearts of all men.

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Marking the Spots





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